Walter fitz Other (c. 1037–c. 1116)

Origin and Family

Born c. 1037. Died before 1116.[14]

Father: Other (Dominus Otho) (c. 1006–c. 1086)
Mother: Unknown
Spouse: Beatrice. Her last name is not known.[13] She is often referred to as Beatrice of Offley (or Beatrice de Offaly) but this is a later invention. The Peerage simply lists her as "Beatrice". Some sources claim Walter had a second wife, Gladys ap Cynfyn,[1] but this is highly unlikely.

Children:[1]

1. **William fitz Walter** – Eldest son; inherited the manor of Stanwell and served as constable of Windsor Castle. His descendants adopted the surname **Windsor** and held the manor until it was surrendered to Henry VIII in 1542.[3]

2. **Maurice** – Steward (dapifer) of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's under Henry I. Held lands in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Dorset, Essex, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk in 1130. Confirmed in office by King Stephen, he died after 1136 and was succeeded by his nephew Ralph de Hastings.

3. **Reginald (Reinald)** – Steward (chief clerk) to Queen Adeliza, widow of Henry I. Documented as living in 1136.

4. **Gerald fitz Walter (c. 1075–c. 1136) (Gerald de Windsor)** – Steward of Pembroke Castle. Often called the youngest son. Chronology and later genealogical analysis indicate that he was **not the son of Gladys ap Cynfyn**, as some sources claim.

5. **Unnamed daughter** – Evidence for her existence comes from the fact that Robert fitz Walter (of Little Easton) married a daughter of Walter fitz Other. Her name is not recorded in contemporary sources. Some sources show Robert fitz Walter as the son of Walter fitz Otho but he was actually the son-in-law through this marriage.

Notes on order: William is almost certainly the eldest, Gerald the youngest, and Maurice and Reginald likely occupy the middle positions. The daughter's birth order is unknown.

Walter fitz Other, was a Norman known as Gautier fitz Autier.[8] He was most likely not of noble birth as he never obtained a lordship title in Normandy and opted for military service.

According to several sources,[1,4] Walter's son Gerald was by a second wife Gladys ap Cynfyn, daughter of Rhiwallon ap Cynfyn[1]. Other sources[15] show Gladys as Walter's first wife, while others say he was never married to Gladys.[3] In reality, Gladys could not have been the mother to Gerald, as Gerald married Gladys's daughter Nest verch Rhiwallon. Gerald presumably would not have married his own sister.

It appears that while in Normandy, Walter became an adventurer with an interest in the military. He became a trusted compatriot of William I. William raised an army of 4,000 soldiers and invaded England, assuming the throne after his victory in the famous Battle of Hastings in 1066. Walter must have played an important role in the invasion and battle, as he was richly rewarded.[8]

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Property

Walter was one of very few that received vast land grants from King William. For Walter's loyal service, he received twenty-two manors in England, and was still holding these at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086). In this book, he is referred to as Walterius filius Other. His holdings were:[7,2]

- In Berkshire Bucklebury, Chiltone (Chilton), Hagbourne, Wallington, Wokesfield, Wildehall, and Wildhall Farm
- In Hampshire: Malshanger, Gerlei (Church Oakley), and Winsflet (Winchfield)
- In Surrey Chingstone (Kingston), Cortone (Compton), Homers (Hurtmore), Orselei (West Horsley), Pepper Harow, and Woking
- In Middlesex Hatton, Bedfont, Stanmore (said to be his principal residence), Burnham, Ettone (Eton), Hardmead, and Hortune (Horton)
- Walter also owned a town house at Wallingford, a fortified town on the River Thames, between Reading and Oxford.

He also held a royal manor and some woodlands at Windsor, where he was castellan.[1] In this capacity, he held a barony valued at fifteen or twenty knight's fees, and owing fifteen knights as castellan of Windsor. Under King William, a lord was required to maintain a certain number of knights that would be at the disposal of the king. This was King William's method of maintaining a ready army.

Peper Harow

Manor records of the lordships of Eton, Hagbourne, and Peper Harow (Hearge)[6] all confirm that these lands were granted to Walter in 1066, after the invasion. Walter did not have English lands in the time of Edward the Confessor as has been often stated. Furthermore, he did not inherit these properties from his father Dominus Otho.

He, along with from 12 to 20 other Normans, received their holding directly from William. It is estimated that this small group were awarded in total as much as 50% of medieval England.[10]

In 1070 William began the building of Windsor Castle and put Walter in charge of its defense as the first Constable (Castellan) of Windsor. Under the Norman kings, as with the kings of France, the Constable was the principal officer of the royal establishment, and was responsible for the defense of the establishment, by the knights stationed there. It was this position that conferred the name 'Windsor' upon his sons.

Windsor was built by William to control the middle reaches of the River Thames, and together with other castles, each a day's march apart, to keep open the route from London to the south coast, and thence to Normandy. Since Walter was a young man in 1070, to have been given such responsibility, shows great respect for him by William.

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Windsor Castle c. 1070

Some later sources attribute to Walter the responsibility for the King's forests in Berkshire, inferred from his position at Windsor, but this is not supported by contemporary evidence.

Windsor Castle Today

Walter was in the King's service for the next 30 years or more. In 1100, there is a reference to him in the Abingdon Cartulary, where it is recorded that Walter fitz Other, Castellan of Windsor, restored to Abbott Farcius the woods of Virdele and Bagshot, which he had previously held by consent of the abbot's predecessors Aethelelm and Reinald[7]. His wife Beatrice is also mentioned in this notice, as is his son William.

End of Life

Walter fitz Other was living in 1100. He is said to have died before 1116.[14]

Research Notes

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FamilySearch ID: LHVH-1SW
Wikipedia: Walter FitzOther

Further Reading:

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